

13. Si. 10.
THE
C A S E

OF ~~THE~~
Edward Elderton

F A R M E R,

of Old Ford near Stratford-Avon
A

Trage-Comedy,

The like never before

A C T E D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the Author, by R. Tooky, in St.
Christopher's-Court, behind the Royal-Exchange,
1717:

THE

CASE

OF THE

HARMER



ACTED

LONDON

Printed for the Author, by R. Taylor, in St. Christopher's Church, behind the Royal Exchange.

THE Farmer's CASE.

A Trage-Comedy, &c.

THAT the Hamblet of *Startsford-le-Bow* and *Old Ford*, have Asselt for the Poor, Time out of Mind, by a Discretionary Rate, according to every Mans ability, being most equal. That about the Year 1700, some Gentlemen to favour themselves, resolved for a Pound Rate, which was a great Oppression to several People, especially poor Land-holders. It was resolved to petition the Quarter Sessions as the Law directs for relief, which being done, an Order was obtained for the Church Wardens and Overseers of the Poor to shew Cause why this Pound-Rate should not be Quash'd. Upon a full hearing the Pound-Rate was quash'd, and an Order granted for making an equal and indifferent Rate, according to the ability of every Man, and the ancient Custom of the Place; notwithstanding this Order, they made a new Rate more grievous and oppressive than the former, wherein they maliciously Asselt a poor Land-holder, almost as much more as before: The reason being demanded by the Chair-man at our second Appeal to the Rate, the Church-

wardens told the Court they did it because he had signed the former Petition; notwithstanding several of their Pound Rates were Quash'd, and several Orders of Sessions, which I have by me to show, commanding them to Assess for the Poor, in their Ancient way and method, notwithstanding those several Orders, in Contempt of that Court, they have ever since continued a Pound-Rate, which I resolve never to pay by consent.

These Gentlemen, seeing they had so often been baffled, and that I resolved to go on with Petitioning, they form'd a Project to disappoint my just Deligns; they sent for the poorer sort of my Fellow-Petitioners, and threatned them at such a rate they durst no more Subscribe: Others of the better sort they wheedled, by telling them they would make them very Easy; by private abatements, such as shou'd be to their own Content; but for *Elderton*, because he was such a Stubborn Fellow, they was resolved to make him submit, cost the Parish what it would; which might easily be done if they refused to Subscribe any more Petitioning; by this Trick I was left to shift for my self, yet resolved to venture another Petition alone, when I found I could get no Hands, which was circumvented by my Adversarys prevailing with the Clerk or Clerks, that the Petition might not be Read, while a Party was ready to Expose me, as a troublesome Fellow, in contending alone against a whole Parish; yet I resolved not to pay that unlawful Rate without Distress, which I refusing, they got a Warrant, and came with the Constable, Church-warden and Overseer of the Poor, to make Distress, I shew'd them a sufficient Distress, and told them they might Execute their Warrant, the Church-Warden at that Time being an honest Gentleman, said he thought in his Conscience

Conscience I was oppress'd, and that he would not Execute his Warrant then, but desired I would come to his House at a certain day, and in the mean time he would perswade the Gentlemen to make me such Abatements as were reasonable; accordingly I went, but could not agree, at taking my leave of him, he desired me to come once more, and then he did not doubt but that we should agree very well, so the second Time I waited on the said Church-warden, and after he had treated me very Nobly, he told me he was heartily sorry, and indeed ashamed that the Gentlemen should set up such a new fashion'd Rate on purpose to Ease themselves, and to Oppress the poor Landholders, which he knew some that could not pay their Rent, their Farms being so dear before, but that said he, I am but one Man and cannot help it; come Neighbour said he, I remember when we were together last, we parted for Forty Shillings, let me perswade you to pay Twenty and I will abate the other, and if the Parish will not allow it me I will pay it out of my own Pocket, which I agreed to, and pay'd him his Money, he cross'd the Book and gave me a Receipt in full.

In this method the Parishoners went on for two or three Years, and made such Abatements as could be agreed on; at last their Minds alter'd, and they resolv'd to abate nothing, and also Summ'd up all the abatements which they had formerly made, and agreed to put them in Arrears, with half a Years Assessment, which amounted to about two or three and forty Pound, which I indeed refused to pay; however, whether the Justice of Peace refused a Warrant, or whether they were afraid to make Distress I know not, but instead of making Distress, which they

they ought to have done, had their Rate been Lawful; they Summons me to appear at Sessions, which happened at such an unlucky Time, when I was necessitated to go to a Country Fair for two or three Days, so they took the advantage of a Contempt, and preferr'd a Bill of Indictment against me, for not paying to the Poor, they made great Expedition in sending the Bill to the Grand-Jury, which they would not Find, the Court demanded of the Jury why they did not find the Bill, the Foreman told them they could not believe the Witnesses who Swore that *Elderton* rented above two hundred Pounds a Year, and for above two Years past, no distress to be found, which some of the Jury knowing the Farm, and walk'd there very often, had always observed great quantities of Hay, Corn, Cattle, several Teams continually carrying of Dung, at Plow and the like; however a Neighbour of mine and an Officer to the Bench, after several scurrilous Words to the Jury, told them if they would not find the Bill, he would have a Jury that should, which was procured. The first day of the next Sessions, the Bill being found, they immediately got a Bench Warrant, deliver'd it to the Constable, with an Order to take a good Guard of Head-boroughs and Watch-men, as if I had been a Traytor, Murderer or Highwayman, and knowing I was gone to a Country Market, I staying later than ordinary, after they had spent above twenty Shillings of the Parish Money, as one of the Company afterwards told me, they placed one on the top of a House to discover me in time, and give the Allarm, however their Centinel, having a Pot too much, neglected his Duty, and I discovered them first; guessing at their Business, I clapt Spurs to my Horse
and

and left them to lament their disappointment, with those expressions, D—m him he is gon, D—m him he is gon. However I was forced to keep out of the way while the Sessions was Ended, to my great Loss and Damage, in neglecting my Business. Afterwards I brought a *Cisserio* and carried their Indictment and unheard of Case to *Westminster*, where the late Lord Chief Justice *Holt* Quash'd the Indictment, and so overset this Project. This so enraged them, that they studyed all manner of Ways to Abuse and Oppress me; they have Assess'd me 36 *l. per Annum*, tho' all the Pensioners in the Parish, for many Years; one with another, has not amounted to above 70 *l. per Annum*. So that I pay about one half of that Charge. I do not remember above one half Years Assessment but what has been Assess'd at two Shillings in the Pound, which amounts to almost two hundred a Year; so that here is above a hundred a Year which I cant imagine what becomes of it, nor am not suffer'd to know, tho' I have been promis'd faithfully by some in Authority, yet never perform'd. At length, out of Spight, they Chose me Overseer of the Poor alone, tho' formerly there was two, I being unfit for it by reason of my Age, being near Seventy Years, having not my Pen, abundance of Business, and not well able to walk a Mile; however a Justice of Peace was pleas'd to Compliment me with Joy to me for my Office, and how he had indeavoured to put me in a Post where I should see all their Accounts, which was a meer Compliment indeed, for whereas I was Chose at Easter, the beginning of *April*, I was kept from Acting till they had pass'd all their Accounts, which was till the Sixth of *July*, and then was serv'd with a Warrant of Confirmation

on from the Justice, and a List of the Poor from the Church-warden. Immediately after, comes an Order from the Justice for me to pay the Poor, who were almost four Months behind, I paid most of the Impotent, as Infants, Aged, Blind and Lame; but such as were idle and able to Work, I employed, where some of them earn'd three times as much as their Pension, and so kept their Pension whole till Winter, when they could not work; six or seven Months being past, I thought it high Time to call for a Rate, but was shuffled off from Time to Time, at length I told the Church-warden, if he did not call a Vestry to make a Rate, I would complain of him, at last he gave notice in the Church for a Vestry such a Day and Time, to make the Poores Rate: According to the Time appointed I went to the Vestry, I met the Beadle between the Church-Door, and the Church-wardens, which are almost opposite; I ask'd him if there was no body come yet, he thought there was not, but if there was, they were at the Church-wardens, for there they used to hold their Vestry; indeed the Vestry in the Church is a place of cold Comfort, there is neither Ale, Bear, Wine nor Punch, nor any Eatables as there is over the Way, where very few but Church-Mice come, who declare they will not do any Parish Business at any of their own Expende; however I went over the Way to the Punch Vestry, there being no Body come, I call'd for a Sneaker, never caring to drink Wine in an Ale-House; I thought I must call for something to drink with the Church-warden while the Gentlemen came, but we might have drank long enough, for no more appear'd that Night, only the Church-warden and I took a hearty Cup till it was late, and so parted without any Parish

Parish-Charge as *I* know of. At parting the Churchwarden promis'd to call another Vestry the next Sabbath-Day, which indeed he did, a 3^d and 4th, and all to no Purpose, for no body appear'd to make a Rate. *I* being a weary of so much trifling, so much loss of Time and Expence, needless Parish-Charge, to make fresh Proclamation every Week, which might as well have been done by Adjournments from Time to Time without that Charge, *I* went to a Justice of Peace and acquainted him how *I* was used, and that if *I* had not a Rate *I* would pay the Poor no more. Sometime after a 5th Vestry was call'd, and no more Appearance then before. After a long Attendance beyond the Time appointed, *I* told the Churchwarden *I* would stay no longer, nor come no more amongst them for a Rate. He desir'd me to stay, and he would send for his Partner, and if no body else appear'd, we should go on and make a Rate our selves, which we might lawfully do. After we had done it, they refus'd to sign, telling me they would go the next Morning for the Justice to View it, and then it should be sign'd and sent me, but *I* heard no more of it for a considerable Time, till *I* refus'd to pay the Poor.

Then *I* had a Book sent me quite alter'd to what we had Asses'd, and between Forty and Fifty Pound of old Arrears, some of five or six Years standing inserted: *I* consider'd, if *I* reject-ed the Book, as *I* might lawfully have done, it might have made a Sessions Business; spending Money, loss of Time, besides the Poor must have their Pensions, and *I* might be streightned for Time to Collect my Money while in Place, also *I* thought *I* could Collect a great deal of the old Arrears which was in rich Mens Hands, so *I* took the Book, and imploy'd the Beadle, as most of

my Predecessors had done, with some Assistance I Collected the Book very clean, as the Justice said when he pass'd my Account, but not so clean as I could have done by thirty or forty Pound, if I could have obtain'd a general Warrant, as is customary in that Case: Indeed I had a Warrant, but it was like the Spider's Webb, to catch the small Flies, but would not hold the great ones; for Instance one very rich Man above twenty Pounds in Arrears, put into my Book, but left out in my Warrant, with several Cases of the like Nature. My time being expir'd, I was ready with my Accounts, and after as many Meetings about my Accounts, as there were for Assessing my Book, which were perfectly needless, for my Accounts were so fair and plain, that when the Auditors met, they were done, I believe, in an Hours Time, and Signed. I ask'd the Gentlemen if they had done with me, they told me yes; I going to take my Leave of 'em, one of the Gentlemen told the Churchwarden, since the Overseer had been so careful to Collect the Book so well, and so kind to the Poor, they could do no less then Treat him with a Glass of Wine, which I was loath to accept; but being overperswaded, I sat down, suspecting there was more Trick then Kindness, as it presently appear'd, for one of the chief Auditors takes a Paper off the Table, tells his fellow Penman there was was a Mistake in the Account, the other denies it, to *pro* and *con* they go; nothing will End the Dispute but to see my Book, so I threw them my Book, then soon ended the Controversy, for instead of returning me my Book, one of 'em threw it over the Table to the Churchwarden, telling him the Book belong'd to him, and bid him put it up, which he did; this unaccountable

Action

Action wonderfully surpriz'd me, but Bridling all manner of Passion, I said, Gentlemen, is this your Way of Proceeding? they told me yes, and insisted on it that the Book belong'd to the Churchwarden; I told them that I had serv'd in that Office before some of them were Born, and if they knew no better, I did, and will make them be glad to bring me my Book before I had done with them; I had Notice the next Morning to wait on the Justice at the Churchwarden's that same Evening, which I did, the Churchwarden delivering my Book, with my Accounts, to the Justice, he perusing them both, and said it was a very fair Account, and the Book very well Collected; but gave my Book back to the Churchwarden again; upon which I told the Justice the Book was mine, and I hop'd he'd order me my Book: No, said the Justice, it belongs to the Churchwarden, and I shan't order it to you. D—, an old Sophister, standing by, took the Justice aside to Whisper; in the mean Time I demanded my Book of the Churchwarden, which he Refusing, I took my Leave, and as I was going out of the Door, I heard the Justice say, give him his Book; somebody calling after me, I turn'd me about, I saw my Book in a Hand, and only a Voice, here is your Book, take it; I will not take my Book from an unknown Hand, said I, with that the Churchwarden made a full Body towards me, and gave me my Book. Sir, said I, I don't thank ye for it; but ye have fulfill'd an old Proverb, *It is a shame to Steal, but a worse to carry Home*; so there's an End of my Honourable and Profitable Office of Overseer of the Poor. Let any rational Man judge how barbarously I have been used; I am an old Man, I have a great deal of Business, I rent almost twelve Hundred a Year:

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Indeed *I* have lately dispos'd of a pretty deal, and must put off more as fast as *I* can, nay, even all, for they have sworn they will ruin me, cost what it will, and for no other Reason as *I* know on, but because *I* have baffled them in all their Knavish Designs. *I* hold so much still, as *I* paid above threescore Pound to the Poor last year, ending at *Lady-Day*, thirty Six Pound where *I* live, and almost thirty in three other Parishes. When *I* was Overseer *I* paid all the Pensioners 13 Months, was forc'd to leave a great many Gentlemen in the Book uncollected, and yet return'd almost Ten Pound overplus to the Churchwarden, by the Justices Order, notwithstanding they must have another Half Year at two Shillings in the Pound, under Pretence of a Poors Rate, which the Churchwardens always Collect, *I* suppose most of it for Pocket-Money, or *I* can't tell for what, nor they won't let me know, nor indeed, as some of them have said, they durst not let me know. The Auditors shou'd be very just Men by one Passage, *I* suppose they observe the saying of the Lord Chief-Justice *Cook*, *It was the greatest Injustice a Man cou'd Exercise to condemn another for what he has been guilty of himself*, there's but a few of them, and *I* think all has been Churchwardens, most of them have a Captain's Belly, they do what they please without Controul, so long as they have a great one in Authority to stand by them. Another great Oppression, they made we Work 36 Days with a Team to the Highways, last Year, which was more then they could compel me to by Law, for the Land *I* held, tho' several rich Men were excus'd for Half, nay some not one quarter of their Duty, and then upstarts a Rate, as they pretend, to reimburse the Surveyor, where they Asselt me eight Pound

Found Ten Shilling, then comes a Message for
 some Teams, which if I would send I should be
 paid; and truly I like a Fool acted as the *In-*
dians do, Sacrifice to the Devil, because he
 should not Hurt; but I suppose I shall be paid for
 my Teams, as other Tradesmen and Poor Men
 are with their Bills, when the Bargain is made
 very Sharp, and the Work is done, if they
 won't abate a third, or a quarter, or there a-
 bouts, he'll run the Hazard of an Arrest, or
 abundance of Duns; the year before the Sur-
 veyor of the Highway was charg'd to see that I
 did my Duty, he being sent for and examin'd,
 he told them, I had willingly done my full Duty,
 and more; nay, more Work then all the Parish
 beside, and yet a great Man goes unluckily to a
 Counsellor of mine, to know if they could not
 force me to do more Work, or pay them Mo-
 ney, these and a great many more Hardships
 and Oppressions which I can't remember; but
 now I think on't, the Assessors of the King's Tax
 would know what they must Assess me for Stock,
 I told them I had none but Stock upon Land,
 which was Corn, Hay, Cattle, and the like, which
 was not Sessable; no Matter for that, we will
 Assess ye. Gentlemen, I believe ye know I have
 appeal'd it off many Years ago, why then said
 one of them, ye may appeal it off again; but said
 I, Gentlemen, why will ye give me the Trouble?
 Because, says he, *You are a Whiggish old Rogue.*
 Last year they have made a Half Years Rate,
 which was not due till *Michaelmas*; in less then
 14 Days Time they came to me with a Justi-
 ce's Warrant, dated the 4th of *October*, which
 was but 5 or 6 Days after it was due, and made
 Distress for 17*l.* tho' not a 20th Part of the
 Book Collected. They asslighted me into the
 Spiri-

Spiritual Court for not paying a Church-Rate, which I refus'd to do, knowing the Churchwardens had Money sufficient in their Hands without that Rate, if they cou'd be brought to Account. My Answer to their Libel was in Substance, that there being Money enough in the Churchwardens Hands, I humbly prayd that the Court would Order the Churchwardens to bring in their Books into Court, which the Court at first refused to do, alledging, that several of the Churchwardens might be dead; but my Spiritual Lawyer insisted that if the Men were dead, the Books and Accounts might be alive; so at Length, rather then loose a good Cause, Trading being dead, they Decreed for the Books and Accounts to be brought into Court, for fifteen or sixteen Years last past. With a great deal of Trouble we had the View of them. In the Vestry-Book we found several Churchwardens charg'd with Sums and Rates, but unaccounted for; some Accounts Ballanc'd, but sign'd by neither Auditor nor Justice; some sign'd by foreign Justices without any Auditors, or our own Parish Justices. Two years together no Churchwarden to be found, neither in their Books of Accounts, nor in Doctors Commons. One or more of the Churchwardens being cited to bring in their Accounts, their Proctor only appear'd for him or them, but no Churchwardens suffer'd to give their Accounts there, for what Reason I know not, but immediately went on to Tryal, cast and condemn'd me 33 *l.* 10 *s.* Cost and Damage.

I finding myself thus trick'd, resolv'd never to pay it; so for a Contempt they proceeded to an Excommunication; which upon a serious Consideration I sent my Wife to an eminent Gentleman, in whose Power I believe it lay to have

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stoppt the Excommunication for some time, to
 try if it could be accommodated : But receiving
 for Answer, There could be no Time allowed, I
 also sent my Son to the Churchwarden, to tell
 him, That finding my Wife and Family so con-
 cerned and terrified about an Excommunication,
 that if they would give me but one Week's time,
 I did not question but in treating with them I
 should raise Money, and accommodate it; but if
 they would proceed to excommunicate me, I was
 resolved never to comply. The Churchwarden
 answer'd, That the Gentlemen had charg'd him
 to omit no time in the Prosecution, and so they
 parted. The same Evening our Minister, which
 I always look'd upon to be an honest sober good
 Man, and yet I think he strain'd the Lace a little
 too tite; for whereas I have been inform'd, 'tis
 customary in such Cases for the Minister of the
 Parish to give fourteen Days time, or at least one
 Week, to admonish, which if he had done, it
 might have saved the Parish a great deal of Mo-
 ney, and perhaps a Family from Ruin, which I am
 sure has been as good a Benefactor to him as
 most in the Place. But instead of any Time of
 Admonition, he sends a Letter to my Wife,
 dated Saturday Night, which I have to show,
 That he was very sorry he had receiv'd Notice
 from the Churchwarden, that he must Excom-
 municate me next Morning, or that he must be
 Excommunicated himself. O rare Christianity!
 What, destroy a Man Spiritually and Tempo-
 rally at so short a Warning. Sure I have not
 been such a Brute, to deserve such Hardships.
 Surely 'tis high time to say something in my own
 Vindication. — Altho I am slighted and
 abused so in this Parish, and not suffered to see
 their

their Accounts nor Actions, yet I must tell ye, tho not out of Ostentaion, I have been courted to serve almost all Offices in two several Parishes many Years ago, which many now living can testify in both Parishes, with as much Ease, Industry and good Husbandry, for the ease of the Parish, and the Good of the Poor, as any of my Predecessors or Successors has done. When I was Under-Churchwarden of *White-Chappel*, our Predecessors left the Parish above Two Hundred Pounds in Debt, which we borrow'd at Interest to pay off: The Pensioners Books almost Twelve Hundred Pounds a Year, which in two Years time, by my Management, was reduced above Two Hundred Pounds a Year. I caused to be put out between Fifty and Threescore poor Children Apprentices, for a great deal less than their Pensions would have come to.

By this Action I believe we lost almost as many more, which, rather than have their Children put out, they'd leave their Pension, and very well they Might, for by the Neglect and Carelesness of our Predecessors; I found some Children of 13, 14, 15, nay 16 Years of Age, some by their Mothers kept to Work at 3 or 4 Shillings per Week, more or less; and some I suppose kept for a more Profitable Imployment, walking the Streets Early and Late, being lucky to see what they could find, and some that had so much Pride and Substance, they Scorn'd their Children should be put out by the Parish, tho' they had been kept Pensioners many Years. By this method we paid the Parish's Debt and Interest, and had so much Money in our Hands at the Expiration, that we bought a Velvet Pall of between Fourty and Fifty Pound, which brings in the Parish a great deal of Money yearly. When we

we gave up our Accounts, I had the Thanks of the Gentlemen and Justice too, and had Ten Pound allow'd me towards my Extraordinary Expences, this Method being extremely approved on in the Neighbouring Parishes, the Churchwarden of *Lime-House* came to me and desired I would Assist and Instruct him, for that he was resolved to go on in that Method, being so much the Interest of the Parish, and for the good of the Poor; which I did to the utmost of my knowledge: So the Churchwarden went and Communicated this to the Gentlemen of the Parish. After several Disputes and Arguments about it, one Gentleman made a Speech to this purpose.

Gentlemen, *said he*, I like the Method very well; but I think we may make an Addition or Amendment. We have a great many poor Children, 'tis true, but they have no manner of Learning, nor Government; Now let us subscribe for a School; let our poor Children have a little Learning, Order and Government, and then they will be fit for Apprentices any where, and a great many People will be glad of such Servants.

This Method was approved and resolved on; abundance immediately subscribed, and so begun the first Charity-School in or about *London*. And I conceive there is no greater Charity in this Age, than to take care and put poor Children to Learning or Labour, the neglect of which, I am afraid, has brought several of 14, 16, 17, and 18 Years of Age, to the Gallows, as we have had Experience in some late Sessions. This I hope has convinced our present Churchwarden; for the last time I ever spoke to him, I ask'd him, How many Children he had put out? He told me One. I ask'd him, How old it was? He said, a Girl about

bout 14. Which if he had kept a little whisking
 Alehouse, as he did not long since, she would
 have fitted for a Tender, and have saved the Pa-
 rish five or six Pounds, as they used to charge
 formerly for putting out poor Children. When
 I was Overseer, he would not suffer me to put
 out one, nor I believe there has not been three put
 out these several Years, but keep them idling
 and shamefully in Pension, to spite me, and in-
 flame my Reckoning, as some of them have told
 me to my Face. Now some will say, we hear
 but with one Ear; this can never be all acted
 without some Cause for it. I answer; Then let
 my Adversaries muster up all my unjust and base
 Acts wherein I have deserved this Usage, which
 I am sure will be done in a little room, and ad-
 vertise it in the Gazette, or any other Paper,
 which may be done at a small Charge; which I
 challenge them to do if they can or dare. No,
 no, I have affronted *T—s W—n*, a devilish
 Rich Man now, but once a Beggar, yet by his
 Cunning will be Vicar of *Bray*, let who will be
 King; in telling him of his Lying, not perform-
 ing his Promises, of his Uncharitableness in Op-
 pressing poor People, of his Unrighteousness, for
 not paying his Bills without extravagant Abate-
 ments, or Trouble, and shamefully to suffer him-
 self to be arrested by the Penny-Post-Man for
 bringing him Letters; but more especially for
 putting him in mind of Mortality, as *Diogenes*
 told *Alexander*, he was looking for his Father *Phi-*
lip's Bones, but he knew them not from the meanest
 of his Subjects. I believe *Alexander* was as Wise
 and as Rich as our Brute, and yet was so far
 from taking affront at that Saying, that he ad-
 mired it so, that if he had not been *Alexander*,
 he could have wished himself *Diogenes*. Indeed,
 some

some of these are great Affronts, but all very true. This makes my Adversary *Champ* fret and foam like a Boar, casting his Eyes on every side to see where he can gash me with his Tusks, but can find no Opportunity; but to put and keep such Men in Place and Office as shall oppress, bait and abuse me, such as *T---* *K---*, one of a scandalous Family, whose Father was a poor debauch'd broken Fellow, his Mother had a Bastard at almost Fifth Years of Age, and both relieved by the Parish. This is a Fellow that must be kept in a Sessior, an Auditor, tho his own Accounts not pass when Churchwarden some years ago.

And such as *T---* *R---*, a new Convert, who magnifies himself for a mighty Whig, roars like a Lion against *High Church* and *Jacks*, and has quite forgot his one Actions the latter part of the last Reign, how he encourag'd the *High Church Mob* to break the Glasses of several sober Gentlemens Coaches, with his Fool's Feather in his Cap, crying, *High Church, High Church*. One of a rare Family, his Father being found in a miserable Condition, with Halter in his Pocket going to hang himself, as he afterwards confess'd; but some time after a small Estate fell to him, enough to find him with Brandy, which he fell to heartily, and kill'd himself. But this our Deputy-Governor his Son come not long since from a little pimping scandalous Alehouse, which he was forced to keep for Bread, and indeed was very fit for it, having a large Tap-Tup to empty Pots in, and a Proficient at roaring out Baudy and Debauchery faster than a Monkey can crack Nuts, which he takes abundance of Pride and Delight in; but when he has

go:

got his Guts well stufft with Wine, Punch, Brandy, or Stout, of which I believe he will drink as much as some Sows will Whey, and his Brains well stufft with Nonsense, which are his chief Properties; then he forgets his new Principles, and falls upon me with being acquainted with *Tutchin the Observer*; with prodigal Illuminations; making a superfluous and extravagant Bonfire on the Thanksgiving Day for suppressing the Rebellion; with bragging that he is sure to hold his Place as long as I am living, or out of a Jayl.

Some other Popish Brats, alias High Church in Masquerade, which I think there is little odds, witness *Dumblain* and *Preston*; for that such as *D—l S—n*, such as *M—m A—t*, such as *W—m A—ms*, and such as *C—ne*, who keep a mighty bulkey Jacobite Club, which not long since had a High Church Priest who was turn'd out of his Living for his Debauchery, he was their Oracle, and said Grace at their Treats.

Out of this Nursery of Rebellion which have quite forgot *Non-Resistance* and *Passive-Obedience*: out of these arise my Enemies, which would have made shorter Work with me, could they have had their Wishes, when their infamous Healths and Huzza's went so merrily round at their own invented Roguish News of *Argyle's* being beat and kill'd in *Scotland*, and *Carpenter* routed in the *North*.

Out of this cursed Cabal have some been so foolishly, knavishly, and revengefully taught they have invited the Leet Jury to fine me Fifty Pounds for laying a Dunghil on my own Land, because it stunk, and offended some of these upstart.

start. Gentlemen, who have in our Memo-
ry work'd with my Predecessors for a Shilling
or Fourteen Pence a Day. Some of these are now
curst Rich: They say, as *Crispin* said to *Saladin*,
What can move me?

There is a Saying, *Set a Beggar on Horseback,*
and he'll ride by you. Some of these are like
the Fox in the Fable, when he could not reach
the Grapes, slighted them as sower Trash, and
valued them not. Some of them has offer'd to
Wager Fifty Pounds to Five, that I shall be
catch'd in such a time, which time is past long
ago. Great odds commonly loses. I fancy I
shall prove like the Man's Mare, very hard to
be catch'd, and then good for nothing to them.
Some of these give out, I am broke, and if I am
not, I shall before they have done with me. That
indeed some of them are so charitable, they care
not if they pay all the Money out of their own
Pockets, if they can but keep me out of the Pa-
rish. Which Proposal I have sent them word I
am ready to comply with; but they not only
refuse the Bargain, but wholly deny their Word,
tho I can prove it upon them.

This is like their Schoolmaster and Usher,
the Jesuit and High-Church Priest, who leave
no Stone unturn'd, with Perjuries and Equivoca-
tions to destroy the Body, Estate and Reputa-
tion of all Hereticks and Whigs, as they call
them; (now to see how these Villains Rejoyce
and Hug themselves up that they will destroy
me); indeed they have taken the right Measures
so to do, and we say there's nothing but may be
done if rightly timed and well managed; my
Land has cost abundance of Money in Stocking,
Planting and Crapping, and will cost a great deal
more before 'tis got in.

My

My Adversaries indeed say, they will Base me of some of that Charge, for they give out that they shall in a little time Seize of all that I have; they have been with several of my Creditors to quicken them up.

I think this is the worst they can do, except (which God avert) their long desired Popish King should be settled here, then I suppose they would have the Charity to fetch me out of Prison if I was there, and hang me up at my own Door, as they us'd to say; but Blessed be God there's a great deal of Room, and Reason, to believe their Hopes are vanish'd for my Days, and for ever.

But suppose these, and all my Adversaries should attain their Ends, to bring me and my Family to Want and Poverty, I must be relieved sure with a larger Pension than they that have liv'd idly and debauch'd all their Days, and never paid one Penny to the Poor; besides, if I should live to be very Old, Age and Poverty are melancholy Companions.

Suppose some of the biggest of my Adversaries now very rich, should be as poor as my self, we might agree then very well, but I think, could not be very Merry.

Suppose another of my great Adversaries then Living should be very rich, there's nothing impossible, God might turn his Heart, his Conscience might fly in his Face, and he might say, there goes a poor Old Man, once very rich, and perhaps might guess as they do now, what I broke for, Ten or Twenty Thousand Pounds.

He rented abundance of Land, had abundance of Corn and Cattle. He employed abundance of poor People, I think I have seen three or four score

score Men, Women and Children at Work in one Field of his; and we see in our Books he paid almost forty Pounds a Year to the Poor.

Pray how came he to fall to decay? why truly, I must needs confess this Parish was the Cause of it in a great Measure; for whereas he paid so much more than he ought to have done, yet we would never suffer him to see the Accounts, which was the only Thing he insisted on, but could never obtain it, tho' he try'd for it by Law, and commonly worsted us, yet he paid dear for it, and was never the near; for he was sure to pay all his own Charge, and we took Care he should pay a good Share of ours. Indeed he was very passionate and wilful, no Body could perswade him to decline it; so the great Expence of Money, loss of Time, and neglect of Business, made him grow Careless. If we had done him Justice, he might have been of great Use to us, for the Benefit of the Parish, and good of the Poor, being so publick a Spirited Man.

He once bargain'd when he was in Prosperity to keep all the Poor, as well accidental as Pensioners, for threescore Pounds a Year; and give good Security to perform, which he could very well have done at that Time to great Advantage. But considering his Chap, which was such a shuffler, that seldom made good a Contract, or paid without trouble or abatements, he being one in Authority, and commonly acted Arbitrary, and baring an old grudge, would have made him very uneasy; and so the Bargain Dropt.

Now I say suppose my Adversaries should have their Ends, sure it must be very Scandalous for them to destroy such a Family, that would

would have been so Useful and Profitable, and now must become so Chargeable; but this is only supposition. For I have that Faith to believe God has permitted these instruments of wickedness to be a Rod to Chastise, but not to destroy me.

Indeed they Act very foolishly, they little think I have a great Lord on my side, which they know not, but now perhaps will be very inquisitive, and I will inform them by way of a Story.

When King James the First came to *England*, keeping his Court sometime at *Greenwich*, besides his Guards, there were strict watching, none to be admitted into the Town after such an Hour; a Gentleman being out late, was staid in the Watch, being examined, he told the Constable he belonged to a very great Lord, what Lord said the Constable, the Gentleman answered very boldly the Lord of Host, and I have been about his business, the Constable pausing a while, ask'd one of his Watch-men if he knew any such Lord, and so examin'd them all, they answer'd him no, well says the Constable, I suppose 'tis some *Scotch* Lord or other, and so let him go.

I believe this Constable and his Watch, might be as wise and as good Christians as my Adversarys, which are so foolish, to labour so hard in making a Rod for their own backs, and digging a Pit which I am sure they will fall into. Some will say you are very confident, I can see no reason, they being a whole Parish, and you no body but your self; yes, yes, I have one friend will out do them all, indeed most of my friends and Lawyers too, mightily perswade me to comply

ply and agree with them, for they can see nothing but Ruin attend: I do but laugh at them, for indeed I think I never was so Merry in all my Life as of late, when most retired; I have given my friends a positive answer, with a Resolution and a Reason, that I have an honest just Cause, a good Conscience and a just God which will deliver me, and confound my Enemies.

You know when *David* offer'd *Saul* to fight *Goliath*, *Saul* said thou art not able, thou art but a Youth, and he a Man of War; but *David* answer'd *Saul* with a Temporal Reason, saying, Thy Servant kept his Father's Sheep, there came a Lion and a Bear and took a Lamb out of the Flock, and I went after him and smote him and delivered it out of his Mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by the Beard and Smote him and Slew him, thy Servant Slew both the Lion and the Bear; and this Uncircumcis'd *Philistine* shall be as one of them; but now *David* comes with his Spiritual Reason, because, seeing he had defy'd the Armies of the Living God; now *Saul* Arm'd *David* with a Helmet of Brass and a Coat of Mail, which *David* threw off, having Armour of his own Experience'd Proof, which was Faith, with that same Armour I am certain to confound all the devices of my Adversaries, because they are cursed, rich, proud, revengeful, unjust, unmerciful, unrighteous Men; they are some of them such as the Prophet *Isaiah* pronounceth, That *wo* unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from Judgment, and to take away the right from the poor, that widows may be their prey, and

that they may rob the fatherless. The Apostle James pronounces a terrible Sentence again such, Go to, now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you, your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten, your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire; ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers, which is of you kept back by fraud, cryeth: and the cries of them which have reaped, are entred into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. But what do I preach this Doctrine to them for, which care not to hear of their wickedness, nor of the punishments that will follow; they had rather hear a Comical Story of me, as they used, to make them laugh, I don't know but they may have some occasion for Mirth before they have done, I am not in a mighty merry Vain of that sort just now, however I will furnish them with two or three Stories, whose Morals may be very proper for them. In the dreadful Massacree in Ireland, Doctor Hall then being Bishop of Dublin, and Commander of a small Army, was resolved to fight the Rebels, and just before he went to Battle, he call'd his Army to Prayer, in which, being fervent and Zealous in the conclusion, he said, thou great God of Heaven, if our Sins have justly deserved thy displeasure, that thou wilt not be for us this day, DON'T BE AGAINST US, do but stand Neuter and thou shalt see how we will hang these Bloody Rogues.

The sum and substance of my Case is this, I have perform'd all the Duties the Law requires of me, to the best of my Knowledge, as a good Parishoner and a Loyal Subject, which instead of being

a Recommendation for civil Usage, are now made Crimes; in such Circumstances I can do no more than make this fair Proffer, as I have formerly done to my unjust Adversaries, that I am willing to refer the Case to Justices and Orators indifferently chosen by them and me, and if it don't appear upon the Decision of such Arbitrators, that the Churchwardens producing their Accounts to be duly examin'd, have more Money in their Hands unaccounted for or imbezzel'd to defray that Church-Rate, as my Adversaries pretend to, I shall willingly submit to pay them their Cost; but if on the contrary it does upon such an Examination appear that the Churchwardens have as much Money unaccounted for or imbezzel'd, that they be punish'd as the unjust Aggressor, and oblig'd to acquit me: I don't mean by this that I would submit to be try'd by my own Parish; for if *Whitney* the Butcher had been try'd by Butchers, he would never have been condemn'd: But I mean to have the Case refer'd to Justices and Auditors of other Parishes indifferently chose by my Adversaries and me; but I know this to be lost Labour, for it has been offer'd so often, and so often refus'd, that I have all the Reason in the World to believe that my Adversaries dare not show their Accounts to such indifferent Arbitrators, or before any Court of Justice in *England*: For besides the Injustice they have done me, they have wrong'd the Parish of Two Hundred Pounds, as the Churchwarden has bragg'd he has spent out of his own Pocket in Prosecuting me, which he does not Question but to be reimburs'd to a Penny.

My Crime, in short, is this, as appears by the preceding Matters, That I have stood by the Privilege of the Parish, and that I have given proof of my

my Loyalty to the old English Constitution, and to his Majesty King George, on all proper Occasions, which I am like to pay dear for, having such an irreconcilable Enemy as T——m, one in Authority of a Bow-dye, which will never raise the Price of Wood and Candles with Illuminations or Bonfires. But as the Poet says,

*To Dog in a Manger some liken I could,
That Hay would eat none, nor let them that would;
Some scarce in a Year gives a Dinner or two,
And cannot abide any other should do.*

I shall conclude, according to my Promise, with a merry Story or two, whose Morals are so plain, that they need no Interpreter. The first is this, *Roger L'Estrange*, after Sir Roger, was seiz'd in the Parliament Army, and condemn'd to be hang'd as a Spy. He was carried accordingly to the Place of Execution, and knowing nothing of a Reprieve which was granted him, as he went lamenting himself very much, said, *Good People, take Warning by me: See what Reward I am like to have for my Loyalty.*

The second is this: A certain Man who had liv'd a long time in a City, had a fancy in his old Age to be carried out to see the Country, in a Chariot drawn by Asses: But by the unskilfulness of the Driver, and the untowardness of the Brutes, was brought to the brink of a Precipice, who seeing nothing but Death before him, he lamented himself thus: *Oh! how unhappy a Man am I! that have lived so long in the City, and now so unfortunate as to lose my Life in the Country by these Brutes: Had it been by Noble Horses, or Sprightly Mules, I could have born it; but to be destroy'd by silly Asses, the Thoughts of it is worse than Death itself.*

I shall finish with a Saying of *Heraclitus*, a great Tory Philosopher: 'Will you not give over to slander, abuse, and oppress me? If you could return to Life 500 Years hence, you would find *Heraclitus* still alive, but not the least Print of your Memory.'

If you wou'd know the Author, Enquire for Edward Elderton of Old-Ford, Farmer.

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